

There are no direct rivals to the Nigerian Mujahideen although there have been sporadic reports of inter-factional violence. Some vigilante groups have also clashed with militant Islamists on occasion, although these are not organised into a structured resistance force.

## Threat Assessment

### Overview

Although initial abortive uprisings by the Nigerian Mujahideen in 2003/4 (see campaign overview) were both short-lived and small-scale, they aroused considerable consternation in both the Nigerian capital Abuja, and abroad, particularly in the United States, which feared that the largely ungoverned region of the Sahel could develop into a new front in its ongoing global war on terror. Such fears account for the prompt and ruthless response to the uprisings by Nigerian security forces – a response which appeared at the time to have rendered the group defunct. However, reports suggest that in the years following 2004, the scattered individual survivors from these initial uprisings slowly began coalescing once more, while remaining underground for fear of further reprisals from the security forces.

The most obvious manifestation of this re-emergence of militant Islamism was the 17 April 2007 assault on a police station in Kano in Kano State. During the assault, the police station and a number of police vehicles were gutted by fire, while 12 police officers were killed and two wounded. The following day, a police assault on the militants' enclave resulted in the death of 25 militants.

The events in Kano, as well as arrests in November 2007 during which explosives were recovered, suggested that militant Islamism remained an ongoing threat in Nigeria. Nigerian authorities also stood by their claims that the Nigerian Mujahideen were connected to international jihadists, alleging that Al-Qaeda was funding the training of Nigerian militants in Mauritanian camps.

The ongoing threat posed by Nigerian Islamist militants was subsequently confirmed when the group launched a major attack on two police stations in the city of Bauchi in the northern state of Bauchi on 26 July 2009. A soldier and 38 militants were killed when the attack on the stations led to a prolonged armed clash in the Dutsen Tenshin area of the city. Following the attack at least 176 suspected members of the group were detained by police.

The attacks in Bauchi were followed on 27 July by further attacks by the group on government and security force targets in three other states in northern Nigeria. In the state of Borno, militants attacked the state capital Maiduguri, destroying two police stations, several churches, a primary school and a government office in the course of the attack. A prison and a number of police residences were also assaulted by militants during the attack which left 90 militants, eight police officers, two soldiers, and three prison officers dead.

Elsewhere in the state militants killed a police officer in the Damask area of Mobbar district and burnt down a police headquarters, church and customs office in the town of Gamboro-Ngala, leaving an unknown number of dead.

In the state of Yobe a police officer and a civilian were killed by militants in an attack on a police station in the town of Potiskum. Seven other police officers were wounded and two government buildings were also set on fire during the attack. Similarly in Kano state militants attacked a police station in the town of Wudil leaving three militants dead and two police officers wounded.

Mohammed Yusuf stated on 27 July that the initial attacks had been launched in response to the detention of nine members of the group in the Biu area of Borno state on 24 July. The men were arrested in possession of explosives and appear to have been plotting an attack. In a seemingly related incident, the following day saw a Boko Haram militant killed when an explosive device he was preparing exploded prematurely in the town of Maiduguri.

With the death of the group's leader Mohammed Yusuf on 30 July, the immediate threat from the group appeared to have dissipated. However, on 9 August the new leader of the group, Sanni Umaru, released an emailed statement in which he vowed to continue fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria. In the statement Umaru warned of the beginning of a bombing campaign targeting major cities throughout the whole of the country. In particular Umaru identified the southern Yoruba, Igbo, and Ijaw ethnic peoples as priority targets – blaming southern members of the security forces for the subjugation of the July uprising.

While further attacks should be anticipated, the threat presented to the Nigerian state should not be overstated. There is as yet no solid evidence of any connection with the international jihad, while even the extent to which Nigerian Islamists exist as a cohesive force under a single banner is uncertain. Furthermore, there is also no indication to date that the Nigerian Mujahideen has the ability to extend its operations beyond the northern regions of the country despite its stated intention to do so.



Locals seeking cover during fighting in Kano in April 2007. (EMPICS)

1339012

### Tactics and Targeting

The primary tactic of the Nigerian Mujahideen is to launch raids against police stations or checkpoints in towns or remote areas. In the first attack by the group in early January 2004, the group attacked and seized control of a town in Yobe State before being forced to withdraw by security forces. Since that attack the group has focused exclusively on small scale raids and ambushes on police facilities.

The series of attacks launched by the group on targets in northern Nigeria in July 2009 was consistent with this targeting trend, with police stations the primary target of attacks. However the militants also attacked a prison, government offices, schools, and churches during the course of the attacks.

In an emailed statement in early August 2009 the new leader of the group, Sanni Umaru, warned of a new bombing campaign to be undertaken by the group targeting cities throughout the whole of Nigeria. He also identified the southern Yoruba, Igbo, and Ijaw ethnic peoples as priority targets for future attacks. This came in response to the subjugation of the July 2009 uprising which Umaru claimed was undertaken by "army and police mostly of Southern Nigeria extraction".

### Weaponry and Equipment

The Nigerian Mujahideen primarily utilise small arms weaponry and it is unknown whether the group has access to, or the ability to obtain, heavier weaponry. Media reports indicated in July 2009 that many of the Boko Haram militants killed in Maiduguri were armed only with machetes.

Security force operations against the group in November 2007 led to the recovery of explosives, but it is unknown in what quantity the group possesses explosives, how easy it is for them to acquire the requisite materials, and to what degree of sophistication they can manufacture the devices.

While the seizure of explosives in July 2009 clearly indicated that the group has the intent to deploy explosives, to date they